

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
February 25, 2009; 4:30 p.m.
Council Chambers**

PRESENT

Akua B. Agyei
Trena Carter
Ian Kohen
Greg Lewis
Tony McClendon
Rosalind Pegram
Gil Palmer
Pam Vincent
John Stroh

Volunteer: Shiva Rallapalli

ABSENT

John Roberts

STAFF PRESENT:

Director Arlette Tinsley and Secretary Lula Young

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Minutes tabled until the March meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley reported no activity in the non-reverting account. The balance stands at \$6,619.95.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners that Council Liaison, Priscilla Scalf intends to bring forward all the Commissioners who indicated their interest in staying on the Commission to the full City Council for their decision at one of their March meetings.

The director continued her report advising that both she and Deputy Director Smith had been in Six Sigma training for the last 6 Thursdays, and they have completed the weekly eight hour training sessions.

Director Tinsley discussed the project facilitated by Sameer Samudra, Six Sigma Black Belt and advised Commissioners that she believes it would be good to have Sameer to present the results of his findings, from a black belt efficiency and improvement perspective, to the Commission as a whole. She asked Commissioners for their preference on a meeting date for his presentation. After some discussion and Commissioner input, the director agreed that she will schedule Sameer for an April presentation.

Director Tinsley updated Commissioners on office activities, advising that there had been a lot of walk-ins, intakes and education programs scheduled. She reported that assistance with community presentations is being received from Commissioners Lewis and Agyei, who will be speaking to the Columbus Peace Fellowship and Commissioner John Roberts who recently spoke to a college class on behalf of the Commission.

OPEN FORUM:

Black History Month Event – Dr. Leon Bass

Chairperson Palmer discussed the presentation by Dr. Bass that he had attended and found him to be a phenomenal speaker and believes that every student should have an opportunity to hear him speak. Commissioner Lewis agreed and illustrated a point made by Dr. Bass to about 250 students at East, to stand up in the face of negative behavior and let them know that you (the student) will not accept that harassing behavior. Both Commissioners praised his ability to pull the students' attention with a simple message that was bound with history. Discussion ensued.

Black History Month Event – Lorraine Smith

Chairperson Palmer reported that he had attended the Black History Month presentation by Deputy Director Lorraine Smith at Ivy Tech on February 17th. He summarized that her presentation asked the question, "Are we there yet?", especially with the election of President Obama. He went on to state the Deputy Director shared her experiences, a first-hand account growing up in Mississippi during the Civil Rights movement. She also made available the books that she has read during her educational journey. The validity of it all is that it is a first-hand account of what she experienced, not so long ago. Dr. Bass is 84, Lorraine is not 84 and even during her life has experienced this personally. Director Tinsley shared a question Deputy Director Smith asked Dr. Bass regarding whether there is still a need to have a Black History Month and Dr. Bass responded by saying, 'we have a need for anything we can get'. Discussion surrounding this issue ensued.

Columbus African-American Association

Chairperson Palmer advised that the Columbus African-American Association (CAAA) had its first public introductory meeting. He reported that approximately fifty (50) community members were present. He stated that the CAAA is honing in on a direction, vision and purpose and is trying to get input from the community to help flesh that purpose out. Chairperson Palmer felt the group was getting there.

C.A.M.E.O. Retreat

Director Tinsley asked Commissioners who planned to attend the Culture Shock training and the C.A.M.E.O. retreat on Saturday, March 7, 2009 if they had confirmed their attendance with Lyn Morgan. Commissioners Lewis and Rallapalli advised they had made their reservations. Director Tinsley provided an overview of some of the training tools that would be utilized by Tatiana Kolovou. Discussion ensued.

Columbus Latin American Association

Commissioner Pegram announced that the Latin American Association has been successful in forming their founding board under the Su Casa 501(c) 3 umbrella. She went on to advise that the board is in the process of writing the by-laws for the association with the twelve (12) member board. Commissioner Pegram also shared that the board members desire only

Spanish-speaking members on the board for the first year. She continued by saying their initial goals are to develop leadership within the Latino community and bring more of the arts into the local community.

Mission Trip

Commissioner Lewis shared some of the experiences that he and his ten year old son had lived during a 4-day mission trip to Piedras Negras, Mexico from which they had just returned. He commented on the growth within the area since his last trip four years ago. NAFTA has changed the area; there is a burgeoning middle class.

ACTION ITEM – 2009 GOALS & OBJECTIVES:

Director Tinsley provided an overview of the 2009 Goals & Objectives, outlining the additions and modifications to the 2009 Goals and objectives as listed below:

ENFORCING THE ORDINANCE

- Continuously improve procedures, policies and processes to effectively and efficiently enforce the new amendments to the Commission Rules and Regulations regarding age, sexual orientation and gender identity, through voluntary mediation

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

- Explore Six Sigma Voice of the Customer improvements with Commissioners and re-vamp Commissioner training to create “Commissioner as Human Rights Ambassador” Speaker model
- Explore Re-allocation Director and Deputy Director’s time to allow Commissioners to take a significant role in community education
- Create Speakers’ Bureau brochure highlighting Commissioners
- Support the work of the I.U.P.U.C. and Ivy Tech Diversity Cabinet as requested
- Explore Commissioner role in supporting BCSC Schools

Commissioner Kohen moved to adopt the 2009 Goals & Objectives with submitted changes. Commissioner Lewis seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEM – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION:

The slate of officers was presented by Commissioner Carter as created by the nominating committee. The slate was presented as follows:

Chairperson, Commissioner Palmer; Vice Chairperson, Tony McClendon; Secretary, John Roberts; Treasurer, Akua Agyei.

No additional nominations were submitted from the floor. Per the Commission’s Rules and Regulations, Commissioners voted by written ballot for each office individually.

The slate of officers was approved by a majority vote for each position.

ACTION ITEM – Assignment of Annual Dinner Tasks:

Commissioners agreed to respond via email to volunteer for the various tasks associated with the annual dinner.

OTHER BUSINESS – SIX SIGMA PROJECT UPDATE:

Director Tinsley shared some of the responses received during the ‘voice of the customer’ interviews.

C.A.M.E.O.:

Director Tinsley announced that the C.A.M.E.O. report to the Heritage Fund board is scheduled for April and that the introduction to the community will be in May. She reported that C.A.M.E.O. will take over the Columbus Cultural Connection website and that many of the representatives were excited about individual web pages for their respective groups. She stated that other plans included strategic goals about being good speakers in the community and connecting with the schools. Further discussion ensued.

LIAISON UPDATE – IMMIGRATION ISSUES GROUP (IIG):

Commissioner Pegram reported that Senator Greg Walker and Representative Milo Smith attended their November 19th, 2008. She commented that the experience was made more positive by the increased knowledge of immigration issues displayed by both legislators.

LIAISON UPDATES – INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY COALITION:

Commissioner Stroh reported that he would provide the Commission with copies of the reports from presentations at ICC presentations at North Christian and First Presbyterian churches.

LIAISON UPDATES – MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE:

Commissioner Agyei requested assistance in relocating the four timelines created by the Cummins African/African-American Affinity Group (CAAAG) that had been displayed in different Cummins locations during Black History month. She shared that four different topics, Politics, Science, Business and Education had been used; one each per timeline. Staff and Commissioners suggested venues such as the schools and possibly displaying the timelines in City Hall during the month of March leading up to the annual dinner. Discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Lewis seconded. Meeting adjourned.